

Erlanger-Elsmere Schools Early Education Promising Practices

Contact information can be found at the end of this document

Me and My School

This is the second year we have implemented this 6-8 week program at all four of our elementary schools. United Way provides partial funding for this summer program for incoming kindergarten students. These children are able to attend "kindergarten" during the summer. It assists many of our children who have never attended any preschool programs as well as those who have attended. This program also contains a parental component that involves providing transition strategies and activities for the parents as well as the kindergarten students. Teachers also meet with these parents throughout the school year once school has begun. We piloted this program last year in two of our elementary schools and decided to expand to all four elementary schools this summer. The data we have collected indicates that this program is having a positive impact on kindergarten transition and growth.

Born Learning Academies

These are provided at three of our elementary schools. The fourth school does their own unofficial version with our preschool. (Our district preschool is housed at this fourth elementary school.) This program is sponsored by Toyota and is a wonderful program to assist our parents in understanding the importance of high quality early learning on brain development. Our Family Resource Center Directors Facilitate Born Learning Academies in partnership with the building principals.

Toddler School

This will be the third year of our Toddler School. This is a program we provide to parents of children ages 12-36 months at our preschool on Fridays. Parents can sign up for 10-week sessions. We provide screenings, resources, and model activities parents may do at home with their children to assist their child's learning. The public library also helps us facilitate this program. It has been very beneficial to those parents who are choosing to keep their children at home.

E3C- Erlanger Elsmere Early Childhood Community Collaborative

This is a grassroots collaborative which involves all of the early childcare providers, our school district, Head Start, the public library (Kenton County) and both the city of Erlanger and the city of Elsmere. We meet monthly to share ideas, conduct professional development, and have worked on streamlining a process that will allow us to share data with each other. Brigrance Data has been an excellent tool to share and discuss. We believe that together we can improve the quality of early learning for all preschool children in our community from Birth-Kindergarten. This has been an inspiring initiative. Children, Inc. actually provided us with an outreach person who has been working with us to make contacts and develop authentic relationships with all of our early childhood partners.

Pre-K Works

We are partnering with United Way Success By 6, Skyward (formally known as Vision 2015), NKU, the city of Erlanger, the city of Elsmere, 4C, Head Start, the NKY Education Council, and businesses that include the NKY Chamber as a separate meeting group. Our Pre-K Works Group meets monthly as well to work on strategies to develop a community collaborative early childhood learning model that we hope may be replicated across the state. The rough draft plan shared in the Superintendent Toolkit was developed as we worked through both the E3C and the Pre-K Works Group. Through these meetings we also strengthened our relationship with Head Start and were able to double our slots with Head Start for 2015-16 and change all of the half-day slots to full day. We are happy to share that those full day slots are already full for the 2015-2016 school year. We partnered with Head Start and went door to door with them this summer to recruit children. The time we spent to do that paid off for our children and strengthened our working relationship.

Blended Public and Private Preschool Model

Children, Inc. partnered with us last year to provide an all day option for preschool children in our public preschool. Those children spent half of the day at our public preschool and then half of the day with Children, Inc. Many children who did not qualify for our preschool spent a whole day with Children, Inc. The 2015-16 school year will be even more blended. We now have 1-5 year olds at this center that may attend all year round from 7 am- 6 pm. We are placing one of our public preschool teachers and instructional assistants at this center and increasing our number of slots. Our preschool staff will work in partnership with Children, Inc. teachers to provide all day services to our children. We plan to collaborate on every level. Children, Inc. renovated a wing of our high school we were no longer utilizing to create an early childhood wing for our community.

Strategic Utilization of Resources

We have made a concerted effort to ensure we are listening to parents' needs and assisting them in finding high quality early learning services. We work to screen as many children as we can for our preschool and have done a great deal of outreach to find parents and ensure they bring their children to those screenings. We also know that Head Start can accept children that do not qualify for our public preschool and that our other early childcare community providers can accept children that Head Start and our Public Preschool cannot accept. We have worked with 4C to ensure that we are assisting our parents in finding options that work best for their child and their family which are also high quality. We have found that this strategic approach assists us in maximizing resources and increasing the number of children enrolled. This collaborative approach is already having a collective impact and has increased the number of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in high quality programs for the 2015-16 school year.

Footsteps 2 Brilliance Learning App

Our district will be providing a research-based learning app free to all community members who have children ages birth up through 3rd grade. This app will enable us to provide countless eBooks, learning activities, and games for any child living within the boundaries of our school district even if they are not of school age. This program will also enable us to collect data on children whose parents choose to enroll them. When they start kindergarten, the child's learning data will transfer with them in the program. This will be the first year of utilizing this program. We hope that it will be a service to the community and enable us to better plan for learning needs within the community as we should be able to determine how many children between the ages of 0-5 are using the program and assist us in having contact information of those parents. We hope to engage these parents in many ways prior to their children starting school once we are able to begin this program. The program also includes a teacher component. We will be training all of our teachers in August and have invited all of our early childcare providers, the public library, Head Start, and other E3C and Pre-K Works members to send a representative. We want to share this resource with all of them so that they may utilize it as well in their centers and with their parents.

Community Block Party

Our school district has hosted a community Block Party for the past few years that is very well attended. This year it will be held on August 14th. This year we plan to utilize it as a way to share the importance of early learning and the available resources to parents. We will have an interactive Born Learning Trail sponsored by United Way, every childcare provider in our community will also have a table and an interactive activity connected with early learning. We will have door prizes, food, music and numerous other community partners present. We plan to use this venue as a way to engage the media to share the importance of early learning and resources available in the community.

Intentional Communication

We have been working intentionally with community partners such as our cities, the rotary club, local churches, the NAACP, and other partners to share resources and information about the importance of high quality early learning for all children. We have worked with all of our E3C Partners and our Pre-K Works Partners to create common messaging to share with everyone. This common messaging has assisted all of us in being focused and clear about the information we are sharing. Part of developing this intentional messaging and communication has included a great deal of listening and learning from one another.

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